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AUTHOR Ringer, R. Jeffrey; Pearson, Judy C.
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ABSTRACT

A study investigated ways in which masculine, feminine, androgynous, and undifferentiated individuals differed with respect to the importance placed upon receiver and sender characteristics as prerequisite conditions for self-disclosure. Subjects, 492 college students, completed a personal attributes questionnaire, which identifies individuals as masculine, feminine, androgynous, or undifferentiated, and a prerequisite condition survey, which asks respondents to indicate how important various conditions are in their decisions to self-disclose. Results showed that (1) masculine subjects saw receiver characteristics as significantly less important for self-disclosure than did feminine and androgynous subjects, (2) feminine subjects saw receiver characteristics as significantly more important than did masculine and androgynous subjects when the topic dealt with sexual activities, (3) masculine subjects viewed sender characteristics as significantly less important than did feminine and androgynous subjects, and (4) undifferentiated subjects placed more importance on an intimate setting as a condition for self-disclosure than did androgynous and masculine subjects. Sexual activities and achievement were revealed as unique and important topics about which people disclose, and psychological sex, or sex role, was shown to be more helpful than biological sex in understanding the prerequisite conditions for self-disclosure.A seven-page reference list and three tables are appended. (FL)

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THE INFLUENCE OF SEX ROLES ON PREREQUISITE CONDITIONS OF SELF-DISCLOSURE

R. Jeffrey Ringer
Doctoral Student

and

Judy C. Pearson
Professor

School of Interpersonal Communication
Ohio University
Athens, Ohio 45701
614/594-5583

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PREREQUISITE CONDITIONS OF SELF-DISCLOSURE

The private nature of self-disclosure, notwithstanding, the social needs of individuals encourage them to communicate varying amounts of personal information to others. Self-disclosure, the information that people intentionally provide about themselves to others, was originally conceptualized by Jourard (1959; 1964) and has become of increasing importance to communication researchers in the past two decades. Originally viewed as unidimensional and universally prescribed, the construct is currently described as multidimensional and it is differentially prescribed.

Recently, Chelune (1979) recommended that a phenomenological perspective be adopted. Responding to his call, Petronio and Littlefield (1982) found that individuals consider both prerequisite conditions for disclosure as well as anticipated ramifications, or predicted outcomes. Four prerequisite conditions were identified: setting, receiver, sender, and relationship characteristics. These prerequisite conditions were viewed as differentially important for women and men (Petronio, Martin and Littlefield, 1984).

In the past, sex-related communication research relied upon biological sex as an attribute variable. Researchers reasoned that sex-role socialization might account for some differences

in communication behavior. Within the past decade, investigators have turned their attention from biological sex to psychological sex type (c.f. Greenblatt, Hasenauer, & Freimuth, 1980; Montgomery & Burgoon, 1977, 1980). The rationale for this alteration has focused on the superiority of conceptual categories which represent a diversity of sex-role identities rather than the earlier bipolar dimensions of male and female.

The purpose of this study is to examine the influence of sex role identification upon the prerequisite conditions to self-disclose.

LITERATURE REVIEW

SELF-DISCLOSURE

Originally, Jourard (1959) argued that the healthy personality was dependent upon self-disclosure to at least one significant other. Later, he modified his view to suggest that the "optimal" amount of disclosure in certain conditions is a prerequisite to mental health (Jourard, 1964). While Jourard felt that open communication promoted growth, current researchers are less enthusiastic about prescribing self-disclosure for all relationships. Two communication investigators offer a caveat,

> . . . the communication of intimacies is a behavior which has positive effects only in limited, appropriate circumstances. . . . 'the transparent self' is not, perhaps, the ideal model for all people (Gilbert & Horenstein, 1976, 321).

Neither linear nor curvilinear relationships between self-disclosure and interpersonal effectiveness have been demonstrated (e.g., Chelune & Figueroa, 1981; Cozby, 1973). Cozby (1973) observed that part of the problem was the designation of self-disclosure as a personality trait. Others have similarly observed that self-disclosure varies according to interpersonal and situational factors (e.g., Chelune, 1977, 1979; Pearson, 1985).

Chelune (1976) offered a self-report survey which was designed to tap social-situational factors. His instrument was "sensitive to the . . . influences of target-person and setting-differences upon an individual's level of disclosure" (p. 111). Since self-disclosure varies according to interpersonal and social-situational factors, individuals must be aware of these factors in order to communicate effectively. Flexibility is essential in order to adapt one's communication to the situation. The flexible individual will function more appropriately than the less flexible person who is unable to discriminate between appropriate and inappropriate self-disclosive situations. Chelune (1977) observes, "The ability to accurately differentiate social-situational nuances and adapt one's disclosures accordingly is most likely the element that determines whether or not self-disclosure is related to personality health" (p. 1142). The healthy personality is not correlated with more or less disclosure, but with adaptability.

Research in the area of self-disclosure has centered around interpersonal aspects of self-disclosure such as gender of sender and receiver, relationship between sender and receiver, sex role orientation, attractiveness, trust, and loneliness; and situational factors such as first encounters, developing relationships, and topics discussed. Let us examine one of the most salient of these areas--the influence of gender on self-disclosure behavior.

GENDER

Biological Sex

Even though a few studies have shown that men disclose more than women (c.f. Gilbert & Whiteneck, 1976; Jourard & Friedman, 1970) the preponderance of research shows that women disclose more than men (c.f. DeForest & Stone, 1980; Levine & Franco, 1981; Littlefield, 1974). A small, but significant number of studies show that men and women disclose to the same extent (c.f. Gilbert & Whiteneck, 1976; Sermat & Smith, 1973). These different conclusions are probably based on a variety of dimensions which interact with self-disclosure and include the positive or negative nature of disclosure, cognitive or affective information, gender of target person and the individual's psychological sex role.

Although results about positive disclosures conflict, research shows that women offer more negative disclosures than men (Gillis, 1978). Nonetheless, a recent study on gossip suggests

tones of talk about other people (Levin & Arluke, 1985). Women provide more affective information than men do, regardless of the sex of the target person (Highlen & Gillis, 1978).

Research on intimate/nonintimate information yields conflicting results. Women report that they disclose more intimate information than men (Morgan, 1976). In a behavioral study, the level of intimacy was similar (Davis, 1979). Men set the pace and women matched the intimacy level that had been established. These differences may occur because women believe they should disclose more than they do or because men perceive that they should disclose less than they do.

Women tend to disclose more on intimate topics such as religion and sex (Lombardo & Berzonsky, 1979). This is consistent with similar research on conversational patterns. Johnson & Aries (1983) used a questionnaire to discover conversational topics among late-adolescent close friends. The females tended to talk more about things that involved themselves and their close relationships while men discussed these topics infrequently. Men tended to discuss hobbies and interests (commonalities) with their friends in greater depth than did the women. Rubin and Shenker (1978) show that intimate self-disclosure may play a more prominent role for women than men and this difference may stem from socialization patterns.

The gender of the target person also provides differences in disclosive behavior. Women prefer other women as targets (Littlefield, 1974). When opposite-sex dyads were examined, the women did not disclose more than men (Kohen, 1975). Earlier research suggesting that women disclose more than men may have used same-sex pairs rather than opposite-sex pairs. Hacker (1981) suggests that

> friendships between women are not marked by greater self-disclosure than those between men. Self-disclosure, however, is greater in same-sex than in cross-sex dyads, and men and women differ chiefly in which aspects of the self they choose to reveal (p. 401).

Sex Role

One's psychological gender should be more predictive of communicative behavior than is one's biological gender. Indeed, sex role is a more accurate predictor of self-disclosure than is biological sex (cf. Greenblatt, Hasenauer, & Freimuth, 1980). For instance, Lavine and Lombardo (1984) determined that androgynous males disclosed at significantly higher levels than did traditional and undifferentiated males to most targets. Similarly, Stokes, Childs, & Fuehrer (1981) showed that androgynous subjects reported greater overall disclosure.

Some research supports the notion that masculine women, rather than feminine women, disclose more. Doster (1976) found that females who identify with their fathers disclose more than females who rely on conventional role models. Jourard (1964)

suggests that females who engage in greater amounts of self-disclosure may have acquired a masculine-instrumental role rather than a feminine-expressive role. Two additional studies lend tangential support to this suggestion: Hyink (1975) qualified the conclusion that females self-disclosed more than males because he determined that only high ego-strength females were higher in self-disclosure than were high ego strength males; Petersen and Highbee (1969) found that females would disclose to others if they perceived their mother to be cold or indifferent.

Greenblatt, Hasenauer, & Freimuth (1980) add to this perspective by demonstrating that females disclose more than males, androgynous males disclose more than masculine males and androgynous males and females disclose equivalently. They could not show that feminine females disclosed more than androgynous females; as a matter of fact, their data suggest the opposite trend--that androgynous females disclose more than feminine females. Femininity may be the component that contributes to the tendency to disclose for men and masculinity may be the component that contributes to the tendency to disclose for women.

Indeed, Pearson (1980) demonstrated that masculine women and feminine men self disclose more than do women who have low levels of masculinity and than do men who have low levels of femininity. She argued that since masculinity is associated with a cognitive instrumentality and goal directedness which has a focus on self and getting the job done or the problem solved,

it is consistent that highly task-oriented, self-centered women would disclose more than persons who are not.

Why do feminine men disclose more than do non-feminine men? Eakins and Eakins (1978) write,

> There is an asymmetry of nonmutuality in amounts of personal or self information given between nonequals. More personal information flows toward greater status or power. . . .Those with very little power, such as poor people, minorities, those receiving unemployment compensation, and children, must reveal more about themselves (pp. 24-25).

Low status individuals consistently self-disclose more than do persons with high status (cf. Goffman, 1967; Slobin, Miller, & Porter, 1968; Weigel, Dinges, Dyer, & Straunfjord, 1972). Discrimination against feminine men in a homophobic culture may result in their feelings of powerlessness and minority status.

Another explanation for the higher levels of self-disclosure among feminine men lies in the conceptualization of femininity as expressive, supportive, and affective. In other words, feminine men have internalized the stereotyped feminine behaviors of sharing feelings and thoughts. Evidence for this perspective is provided by Pearson (1981) who found that feminine men and feminine women exhibit similar self-disclosure patterns with friends. Stokes, Childs, and Fuehrer (1981) observe; however, that intimate self-disclosures require both assertiveness associated with the traditional masculine role and the sensitivity

and expressiveness associated with the traditional feminine role.

Sex role socialization may affect self-disclosure, but the conclusions of these studies must be carefully examined. Rosenfeld (1979) found that men and women avoid self-disclosure for different reasons. Men reported that they generally avoided self-disclosure in order to help maintain control over others and over the situations; women explained that they avoided self-disclosure in order to avoid personal and relational problems. Men with a need to dominate and women with concern about personal and relational problems each appear to avoid self-disclosure. These results may be suggesting that masculine men and feminine females avoid self-disclosure.

PREREQUISITE CONDITIONS OF SELF-DISCLOSURE

The literature reveals several possible conditions of self-disclosure: trustworthiness, an intimate target, attractiveness of target and other qualities attributed to the receiver. In an extensive literature review, Goodstein and Reinecker (1974) found that a variety of qualities (intimate target, liking target, sex of target, similarity of personality) were attributable to receivers of self-disclosure. Research suggests that self-disclosure is more likely to occur between people who trust each other than those who do not (McAllister, 1980). Self-disclosure also may create trust among the disclosing individuals (Wheeless & Grotz, 1977).

Attractiveness of target affects disclosure. People tend to disclose more to attractive individuals than to unattractive individuals (Pellegrini, et al., 1978; Young, 1980). Pellegrini et al. (1978) also found that attractiveness of the discloser is important in self-disclosure. Men who considered themselves to be attractive disclosed more than men who considered themselves to be unattractive. Women who considered themselves to be attractive disclosed less than women who considered themselves to be unattractive (Pellegrini, et al., 1978).

Petronio and Littlefield (1982) developed an instrument to assess the importance placed upon prerequisite conditions of self-disclosure. The questionnaire includes four categories of conditions (receiver characteristics, sender characteristics, setting characteristics and relationship characteristics). Respondents are asked to indicate on a likert-type scale how important it is for each condition to be present before they would disclose information on each of four topics (global, sexual, achievement and family). Thus, sixteen categories were created (four conditions crossed with four topics).

The receiver characteristics are more specific than those included in previous research. This instrument investigates how important it is that the recipient be trustworthy, warm, open, sincere, liked, respected, a good listener, and show interest before one would disclose information to them.

Previous investigations on sender characteristics emphasizes physical qualities rather than personality characteristics of the sender. We have already summarized the research on gender and self-disclosure. Other variables investigated include racial background (Jourard & Lasakow, 1958), age (Littlefield, 1974), and marital status (Jourard, 1971). The Petronio and Littlefield (1982) instrument examines the self-perception of sender characteristics such as feeling anxious, being willing to provide the information, not being provoked to provide the information, feeling accepted by others, being honest and being frank.

The prerequisite conditions instrument contains items relating to setting characteristics. These items ask how important it is for the respondent to be in a private, relaxed, informal, and public setting; one that feels comfortable; and with just one other person before they will provide information about themselves. The mean of these six items represents the respondent's setting score.

The original instrument also contained five items that related to relationship characteristics. These items attempted to determine the importance placed on particular relationships between the sender and receiver. They included how important it is to have an intimate, comfortable and close friendship relationship with the receiver and to have the receiver be a family member or a stranger.

Petronio, Martin, and Littlefield (1984) determined that women place more emphasis on sender and receiver characteristics than men. Women find it more important for the recipient to be trustworthy, sincere, warm, and open and for themselves to feel accepted by the receiver, not provoked to disclose, and to be honest and frank. Petronio et al. (1984) conclude that women may place more emphasis on these conditions because of the sex role orientation placed by society and apparently adopted by them. If this is so, sex role orientation would be a more accurate predictor of prerequisite conditions of self-disclosure.

Based on these findings, this investigation will test the following hypotheses and sub-hypotheses:

H_1: Masculine, feminine, androgynous, and undifferentiated individuals will be significantly different with respect to the importance of receiver characteristics as prerequisite conditions for self disclosure.

1a. Masculine individuals will view receiver characteristics as prerequisite conditions for self disclosure as significantly less important than will feminine, androgynous, and undifferentiated individuals

1b. Feminine individuals will view receiver characteristics as prerequisite conditions for self disclosure as significantly more important than will masculine, androgynous, and undifferentiated individuals

1c. Androgynous individuals will view receiver characteristics as prerequisite conditions for self disclosure as significantly more important than will masculine, and undifferentiated individuals

H_2: Masculine, feminine, androgynous, and undifferentiated individuals will be significantly different with respect to the importance of sender characteristics as prerequisite conditions for self disclosure.

2a. Masculine individuals will view sender characteristics as prerequisite conditions for self disclosure as significantly less important than will feminine, androgynous, and undifferentiated individuals

2b. Feminine individuals will view sender characteristics as prerequisite conditions for self disclosure as significantly more important than will masculine, androgynous, and undifferentiated individuals

2c. Androgynous individuals will view sender characteristics as prerequisite conditions for self disclosure as significantly more important than will masculine, and undifferentiated individuals

The following research question will guide the research concerning setting characteristics:

RQ_1: How do masculine, feminine, androgynous and undifferentiated individuals differ with respect to the importance placed upon setting characteristics as prerequisite conditions of self-disclosure?

SUBJECTS

Four hundred and ninety two students (267 males and 225 females) from a mid-size midwestern university participated in the study. These subjects were drawn from introductory communication and health courses and were given extra credit for their participation. The average age of the subjects was 19 and they represented a cross-section of fields of study.

PROCEDURES

Each participant completed the Personal Attributes Questionnaire (PAQ; Spence, Helmreich, & Stapp, 1974) and the prerequisite condition survey developed by Petronio and Littlefield (1982) and adapted by the authors.[1] Standard instructions were read to all participating classes. To help control for order effects, half of the subjects completed the Personal Attributes Questionnaire first and half of the subjects completed the prerequisite condition survey first.

The PAQ is a 24-item instrument which identifies individuals as masculine, feminine, androgynous, and undifferentiated. individuals. Eight items measure femininity, 8 measure masculinity, and 8 reflect a mixture of both expressive and instrumental behaviors. The distribution of the PAQ scales in this study, as in previous research, was essentially normal. Thus, the scheme for classifying individuals was based on the median split method proposed by Spence, Helmreich, and Stapp (1975).

Using the median split method, an individual's mean item score on the masculinity and femininity scales was computed. In addition, a median score on masculinity and femininity for the entire sample was calculated. Individuals were then classified according to whether their mean score fell above or below the appropriate median. Those individuals who scored above the median on the masculine items and below the median on the feminine items were classified as masculine; those who scored above the median on the feminine items and below the median on the masculine items were classified as feminine; those who scored above the median on both the feminine items and the masculine items were classified as androgynous; and those who scored below the median on both the feminine items and the masculine items were classified as undifferentiated. One hundred thirty nine individuals were classified as androgynous (68 males and 71 females), 135 were classified as undifferentiated (81 males and 54 females), 114 were classified as masculine (94 males and 20 females) and 104 were classified as female (24 males and 80 females) for a total of 492.

The prerequisite conditions survey asks responds to indicate how important various conditions are in their decision to self-disclose. The original instrument contained four topics (sexual activities, achievement, global, and family) and four characteristics (receiver, sender, setting, and relationship). The adapted instrument used in this study contained three topics

and three characteristics deleting the family topic and relationship characteristic. A total of 63 items were included in this study. Nine items pertained to receiver characteristics, six dealt with setting characteristics and six related to sender characteristics. Subjects were asked about the importance of these 21 characteristics for three topics: Sexual activities, achievement, and global issues.

The 63 items were placed on five-point likert-type scales which ran from very important (one) to not very important (five); therefore, the lower ones score, the more important the characteristic was. The mean of each characteristic was calculated and represents the respondent's score that characteristic. Previous Cronbach coefficients on the original four conditions across all topics demonstrate the instrument's reliability; coefficient alphas were .76 for setting characteristics, .89 for receiver characteristics, .70 for sender characteristics, and .70 for the relationship characteristics (Petronio, Martin, & Littlefield, 1984).

The prerequisite condition survey was factor analyzed using an oblique factor analysis with unlimited factors rotated. The oblique rotation was selected because of the interrelated nature of the items. All factors with an eigenvalue of 1 or greater were initially extracted and rotated (Kaiser, 1974). The scree test was employed to determine the number of factors that were used as the dependent variables in the study (Cattell, 1966).

In addition, each factor had to be interpretable and include at least two items per factor, using the criterion that the primary loading was .60 or above and the secondary loading was less than .40.

The prerequisite condition survey did not produce the expected factor structure of nine factors (three factors by three conditions). Instead, six factors were extracted. The loadings on each factor are depicted in Table 1. The first factor, sexual activities topic, is concerned with setting and receiver characteristics on sexual topics, and accounted for 27.1% of the variance. The second factor, achievement, deals with receiver characteristics on achievement oriented topics and accounted for 10.4% of the variance. The third factor, global information, accounted for 4% of the variance. The fourth factor, candor, deals with the sender characteristics of honesty and frankness across all topics, and accounted for 3.1% of the variance. The fifth factor, public setting, and the final factor, intimate setting, each accounted for 3% of the variance.

Cronbach coefficient alphas were calculated to determine the reliability of the instrument. The overall coefficient alpha for the instrument was .95. For sexual activities, coefficient alpha was .93; for achievement, .91; for global information, .38; for candor, .81; for public setting, .63; and for intimate setting, .82.

RESULTS

A 2 X 4 Multiple Analysis of Variance was calculated to analyze the data collected in this study. The independent variables were the sex of the subject (male or female) and the sex role of the subject (masculine, feminine, androgynous, and undifferentiated). The dependent variables were the dimensions of prerequisite conditions that emerged from the instrument.

The one-way MANOVA on sex was significant (Wilks' lambda (6,479) = .91; F = 7.80; $p < .000$). Given the significant multivariate test, an examination of the corresponding univariate tests are warranted. An examination of the univariate F-ratios indicated that sex was significant for sexual topic (F (1,484) = 24.65; p .001); for candor (F (1,484) = 12.15; $p < .001$); for public setting (F (1,484) = 9.93; $p < .002$); and for intimate setting (F (1,484) = 5.02; $p < .025$). The means are provided in Table 2.

The multivariate F ratio was also significant for sex role (Wilks' lambda (18, 1355) = .91; F = 2.53; $p < .000$) thus warranting an examination of the corresponding univariate tests. An examination of the univariate F-ratios indicated that sex-role was significant for sexual activities (F (3,484) = 5.70; $p < .002$); for achievement (F (3,484) = 3.29; $p < .022$); for candor (F (3,484) = 3.58; $p < .015$); for public setting (F (3,484) = 3.26; $p < .021$); and for intimate setting (F (3,484) = 4.95; $p < .002$). The means for each of the groups of interest on each of these dependent variables are provided in Table 3.

The interaction of sex by sex roles was not significant (Wilks' lambda (18, 1355) = .96; F = 1.16; $p < .29$). Thus the examination of the univariate F ratios was not warranted.

Tukey's HSD test (Kirk, 1982) was used to further analyze the differences that were found on sex roles. For the sexual activities factor, femininity is significantly different from masculinity and undifferentiated, androgyny is significantly different from undifferentiated and masculinity. For the achievement factor, masculinity was found to be significantly different from femininity, androgyny, and undifferentiated individuals. For the candor factor, femininity is significantly different from masculinity and undifferentiated; androgyny is significantly different from masculinity and undifferentiated. For the public setting factor, androgyny is significantly different from undifferentiated. For the intimate setting factor, undifferentiated is significantly different from androgyny and masculinity.

Simple correlations were run between psychological gender and biological gender to insure that the information determined in this study was not redundant with the Petronio, Martin, & Littlefield (1984) findings. The correlation between masculinity and biological sex was -.22 and the correlation between femininity and biological sex was .30. These correlation coefficients, while significant, suggest low relationships between

biological and psychological gender. When one considers the shared variance (5% for masculinity and 9% for femininity), the concern over redundancy appears trivial.

DISCUSSION

This investigation hypothesized that masculine, feminine, androgynous, and undifferentiated individuals would be significantly different with respect to the importance they assigned to specific receiver characteristics as prerequisite conditions for self disclosure. Specifically, the study suggested that masculine individuals would view receiver characteristics as prerequisite conditions for self disclosure as significantly less important than would feminine, androgynous, and undifferentiated individuals. This subhypothesis received partial support. Masculine individuals see receiver characteristics as significantly less important than do feminine individuals and than do androgynous individuals when the topic deals with sexual activities. When the topic is one which deals with achievement, masculine individuals see these characteristics as significantly less important than do feminine individuals.

The study also hypothesized that feminine individuals would view receiver characteristics as prerequisite conditions for self disclosure as significantly more important than would masculine, androgynous, and undifferentiated individuals. This subhypothesis also received partial support. When the topic dealt with sexual activities, feminine individuals see these

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characteristics as significantly more important than do masculine individuals and than do androgynous individuals. When the topic is achievement, feminine individuals see these characteristics as significantly more important than do masculine individuals.

The study hypothesized that androgynous individuals would view receiver characteristics as prerequisite conditions for self disclosure as significantly more important than would masculine, and undifferentiated individuals. This subhypothesis received partial support. For sexual activities, andogynous individuals see these characteristics as significantly more important than do masculine individuals and than do undifferentiated individuals. This subhypothesis was not supported for the topic of achievement.

The second overall hypothesis was that masculine, feminine, androgynous, and undifferentiated individuals would be significantly different with respect to the importance of sender characteristics as prerequisite conditions for self disclosure. Specifically, the study hypothesized that masculine individuals would view sender characteristics as prerequisite conditions for self disclosure as significantly less important than would feminine, androgynous, and undifferentiated individuals. This was partially supported. Masculine individuals see sender characteristics as significantly less important than do feminine individuals; and masculine individuals see sender characteristics as significantly less important than do androgynous individuals.

On the intimate setting factor, respondents were asked how important an intimate setting is as a prerequisite of self-disclosure. The results show that undifferentiated individuals place more importance on an intimate setting than do androgynous and masculine individuals.

The factor analysis identified sexual activities and achievement as unique and important topics about which people disclose. Earlier research showed that women disclose more about relationships (Johnson & Aries, 1983) and sex (Lombardo & Berzonsky, 1979) while men disclose more about hobbies and interests (Johnson & Aries, 1983). The factor analysis in this investigation confirms the distinction between these two sets of topics.

Gender differences in self-disclosure are frequently explained with somewhat amorphous references to socialization. Men and women differentially rate the importance of such prerequisite conditions for self-disclosure as the characteristics of the other person and their own characteristics as providers of disclosure. This investigation clarifies that such rating behavior can be attributed to how individual's perceive their own sex role. Feminine individuals, regardless of sex, rate receiver and sender characteristics as more important than do masculine individuals.

We cannot conclude that either feminine or masculine individuals are superior in their rating of prerequisite conditions

of self-disclosure. First, we do not know how important particular prerequisite conditions should be in effective interactions. Feminine individuals may be overly sensitive to such factors or masculine individuals may be grossly unaware of such variables. Second, we do not know how people's perceptions of prerequisite conditions translates into behavior. Feminine individuals may be aware of such conditions, but feel obligated to disclose regardless; masculine individuals may not be aware of such conditions, but may refrain from heavy disclosure nonetheless. Finally, other's perceptions of disclosure behavior may vary as a result of the observed individual's biological sex, rather than his or her psychological sex. Thus, the feminine man might be highly sensitive to prerequisite conditions and may even demonstrate flexibility in his disclosure behavior; however, others perceive him as disclosing excessively because "real men don't disclose!" Similarly, the masculine female might be discredited because of her insensitivity to prerequisite conditions and the expectation that women should show more awareness of the circumstances in which they communicate.

Sex role has been found to be more useful than biological sex in exploring self-disclosure behavior. We have found that self-disclosure behavior relates to both masculine instrumentality and to feminine expressivity. In this study, psychological sex, or sex role, was shown to be more helpful in understanding

prerequisite conditions for self-disclosure. Feminine sensitivity appears to be directly related to the discernment of prerequisite conditions for self-disclosure. The conceptual categories provided by psychological sex roles allow more diversity and flexibility for individuals and provide a superior method to understanding predispositions for communicative behavior.

Much more needs to be discovered. Spence and Helmreich (1978) observe that "the political, economic and social changes over the past decades have led to a blurring of the formerly sharp division between the roles of women and men" and that, along with this blurring of roles, "men and women may also be in the process of coming closer together in their personality make-up (p. 10). Communication researchers suggest that communicative effectiveness is nearly synonymous with flexibility (e.g., Bochner & Kelly, 1974; Hart & Burke, 1972). Pearson (1985) reiterates that our goal in the area of gender should neither be to encourage women to follow the dominant male model nor to encourage men to enact female behavior.

The important contribution of this study may lie not in the information it provides, but rather in the knowledge it suggests that we need. Earlier researchers demonstrated that masculine and androgynous women disclosed more than feminine women. This study suggests that masculinity is associated with lesser sensitivity to prerequisite conditions to disclose. Previous studies showed that feminine and androgynous men disclosed more than did masculine men. This investigation demonstrated that

femininity is associated with greater sensitivity to prerequisite conditions to disclose.

The overall question that remains to be answered concerns the relationship among sex role socialization, self-disclosure behavior, and sensitivity to prerequisite self-disclosure conditions. In other words, do masculine women self-disclose more because they are indifferent to prerequisite conditions or because they are increasingly assertive? Have they incorporated a goal directness or have they lost their former sensitivity? Do feminine men disclose because of their socialization which includes expressivity or because of their sensitivity to the communicative context? The answers to such questions are essential as we continue to unravel the relationship between gender and self-disclosure and as we seek to understand the changing roles and behaviors of women and men in our contemporary culture.

Notes

[1]The instrument was adapted because of its length (over 100 items), because of psychometric problems with the relationship items, and because the family topic is less relevant for college students living on a residential campus than for students attending a generally commuter school.

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TABLE 1

Rotated Factor Matrix of

Prerequisite Conditions of Self-Disclosure

	Item	Sext	Ach	Glo	Cand	Pub	Int
1.	How important is it to be in a private setting before you give private information about yourself?	.03	-.07	.62*	-.07	-.03	.25
2.	. . . in a setting that feels comfortable?	.09	-.16	.52	-.03	-.06	.12
3.	. . . in a relaxed setting	.03	-.06	.42	-.05	-.07	.09
4.	. . . in a formal setting	.03	-.01	.08	-.01	.08	.00
5.	. . . in a public setting	.03	.04	-.16	.01	.65	.01
6.	. . . to be with just one other person before. . .	.13	-.17	.48	.01	.08	.41
7.	If you were to tell someone private information about yourself, how important do you think it is for that person to be discreet?	.07	-.01	.48	.04	-.25	.06
8.	. . . to be trustworthy?	.11	.05	.54	.21	-.15	-.03
9.	. . . to be sincere?	.01	.14	.53	.26	.10	-.15
10.	How important is it to be like that person?	.11	.12	.60*	-.14	-.03	-.08
11.	How important is it to respect that person?	.06	.10	.58	.14	-.05	-.11
12.	How important is it for that person to be a good listener?	.18	.22	.40	.24	.02	-.21
13.	. . . to be warm?	.13	.23	.38	.15	.17	-.18
14.	. . . to be open?	.11	.18	.39	.26	.23	-.24
15.	. . . to show interest?	.00	.21	.52	.27	.14	-.15

16.	When you give private information about yourself, how important is it for you not to feel anxious?	.04	.06	.09	.08	.14	-.03
17.	. . . for you to be willing to give that information?	.09	.07	.08	.09	-.27	-.05
18.	. . . not to be provoked into telling the information?	-.04	.07	.31	.18	-.27	-.03
19.	. . . to feel accepted by the others?	.16	.13	.42	-.05	.04	-.01
20.	. . . to be honest?	.11	-.04	.14	.61*	-.07	-.00
21.	. . . to be frank?	-.19	.04	.12	.66*	-.01	.07
22.	How important is it to be in a private setting before you reveal the things you would like to achieve?	.09	.23	.08	.07	.21	.62*
23.	. . . a setting that feels comfortable?	.04	.30	.06	.13	.08	.61*
24.	. . . a relaxed setting?	-.02	.31	.00	.14	.14	.59
25.	. . . an informal setting?	-.03	.26	.02	.06	.23	.50
26.	. . . a public setting?	-.13	.10	.06	.00	.54	.27
27.	. . . with just one other person?	-.04	.38	.01	.02	.15	.61*
28.	If you were to tell someone about the things you would like to achieve, how important is it for that person to be discrete?	.00	.51	-.02	.03	.07	.49
29.	. . . to be trustworthy?	.01	.72*	-.02	.06	.00	.29
30.	. . . to be sincere?	.05	.73*	-.06	.09	.01	.20
31.	. . . to be liked by you?	.12	.72*	.08	-.08	-.06	.13
32.	. . . to be respected by you?	.11	.71*	.10	-.02	-.03	.08
33.	. . . to be a good listener?	-.03	.79*	.06	-.03	-.03	-.11
34.	. . . to be warm?	.04	.78*	.00	-.03	.12	.03
35.	. . . to be open?	.01	.77*	-.04	.08	.11	-.02
36.	. . . to show interest?	.00	.71*	.09	.04	-.10	-.16

37.	When you talk about the things you would like to achieve, how important is it for you not to feel anxious?	.04	.30	-.15	.01	.11	.23
38.	. . . for you to be willing to give the information?	.03	.24	-.03	.19	-.32	.13
39.	. . . not to be provoked?	-.04	.23	-.06	.18	-.33	.18
40.	. . . to feel accepted?	.19	.52	.00	-.03	-.03	.15
41.	. . . to be honest?	.04	.04	-.07	.69*	-.12	.04
42.	. . . to be frank?	-.02	.04	-.03	.81*	.03	.02
43.	How important is it to be in a private setting before you reveal information about your sexual activities?	.73*	-.01	.09	-.03	-.08	.13
44.	. . . setting that feels comfortable?	.73*	-.02	.06	-.02	-.12	.10
45.	. . . relaxed setting?	.75*	-.03	-.01	.04	-.06	.09
46.	. . . informal setting?	.53	.03	-.03	-.04	.07	-.04
47.	. . . public setting?	-.09	.03	-.08	.01	.64*	.04
48.	. . . with just one person?	.66*	-.12	.10	.01	.12	.27
49.	If you were to tell someone about your sexual activities, how important is it for that person to be discrete?	.74*	-.01	.06	.10	-.11	.04
50.	. . . to be trustworthy?	.78*	.07	-.02	.16	-.13	-.04
51.	. . . to be sincere?	.76*	.14	.01	.11	-.03	-.05
52.	. . . to be liked by you?	.77*	.11	.09	-.06	-.04	-.08
53.	. . . to be respected by you?	.67*	.21	.02	.09	-.05	-.07
54.	. . . to be a good listener?	.44	.21	.18	.21	.11	-.28
55.	. . . to be warm?	.55	.20	.09	.14	.22	-.13
56.	. . . to be open?	.40	.15	.15	.19	.25	-.32
57.	. . . to show interest?	.42	.15	.00	.13	.19	-.18

58.	When you reveal information about your sexual activities, how important is it for you not to feel anxious?	.43	-.02	-.10	-.01	.10	-.11
59.	. . . to be willing to give the information?	.44	-.05	-.05	.13	-.27	-.07
60.	. . . not to be provoked?	.44	-.03	-.01	.11	-.24	-.07
61.	. . . to feel accepted by the person you are telling?	.64*	.04	.11	.02	-.01	-.01
62.	. . . to be honest?	.25	-.11	-.04	.66*	.01	.05
63.	. . . to be frank?	.07	-.14	-.08	.75*	.11	.02

TABLE 2

Observed Means by Sex

	Men			Women		
Factor	N	Mean	S.D.	N	Mean	S.D.
Sex Topic	267	1.86	.78	225	1.40	.56
Achievement	267	2.27	.86	225	2.04	.83
Global	267	1.89	.76	225	1.78	.66
Candor	267	1.92	.70	225	1.62	.57
Public Setting	267	3.63	1.08	225	3.98	1.03
Intimate Setting	267	2.73	.98	225	2.84	1.03

TABLE 3

Observed Means by Sex Role

	Masculine			Feminine			Androgynous			Undifferentiated		
FACTOR	N	MN	S.D.	N	MN	S.D.	N	MN	S.D.	N	MN	S.D.
Sex Topic	117	1.88	.84	107	1.40	.58	144	1.49	.57	142	1.81	.75
Achievement	117	2.40	.92	107	1.86	.73	144	2.14	.89	142	2.16	.76
Global	117	1.89	.73	107	1.76	.65	144	1.80	.74	142	1.87	.72
Candor	117	1.95	.69	107	1.56	.55	144	1.69	.66	142	1.93	.62
Public Setting	117	3.83	1.07	107	3.85	1.04	144	3.95	1.03	142	3.51	1.10
Intimate Setting	117	2.95	1.04	107	2.62	1.02	144	2.90	1.06	142	2.58	.86